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Subject: Fiscal Year 2025 Land and Water Conservation Fund Project Nominations

To: Regional Foresters, Station Directors, IITF Director, Deputy Chiefs, and WO Staff Directors

REPLY DUE SEPTEMBER 28, 2023

Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) land acquisition project nominations are due to the Washington Office by September 28, 2023. We are pleased to announce that the ranking criteria for FY 2025 nominations have been revised to reflect Agency and Administration priorities. Criterion #4 (Tract Location) was updated to include consideration of projects within high-risk fire sheds to support the [10-Year Wildfire Crisis Implementation Plan](#). Criterion #5 (Connecting Communities/Partner Support) and #11 (Benefits to Vulnerable Communities) were modified to reflect the Justice40 Initiative.

Land acquisition serves as a valuable strategic planning tool to advance Forest Service efforts to address the wildfire crisis by consolidating landownership within forest boundaries. In addition, the LWCF Land Acquisition program was designated a Justice40 initiative given its contributions to rural economic development and other vital benefits to underserved communities. Lastly, the LWCF program delivers essential recreation and public access benefits which continue to be an Administration priority in FY 2025.

Congress affirmed LWCF's importance by permanently authorizing and increasing its funding through the Great American Outdoors Act. The LWCF program is a key part of the Administration's America the Beautiful initiative to preserve 30 percent of the Nation's lands and waters by 2030. Support from local communities, landowners, non-governmental organizations, Tribes, local elected officials, and local environmental justice organizations is vital to ensure the success of any proposed land acquisition.

Please review the updated LWCF Core Criteria and Guidance document to ensure your project nomination addresses the most recent evaluation criteria. All information regarding the FY 2025 project evaluation and prioritization process will be available on the [Forest Service LWCF](#) site.

For additional information, please contact Barbara A. Johnson, National Land Acquisition Program Manager, at (202) 380-7270 or Barbara.A.Johnson@usda.gov.



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Signed by: GREGORY SMITH

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Enclosures (4)

cc: Regional Directors of Lands, Jeffrey Vail, Barbara A. Johnson